

THE
Matter of FACT

Ala Mode de FRANCE:

OR THE
CASE STATED

After the French Manner,

In Relation to the Alliance proposed by the Two Crowns
OF

England and France,

With the STATES of the

UNITED NETHERLANDS.

WITH

Rational Reflections thereon,

IN A

LETTER

From a Burgher of *Amsterdam*, to his Friend in the *Campagne*,

Dated *January 30. 1680.*

Englified from the French Copy.

Printed in the Year 1680.



A LETTER from a Burgher of Amsterdam, to his Friend in
the Campagne. January 30. 1680.

S I R,

THough you reside in the *Campagne*, and within a great retirement, yet 'tis impossible that the report of the affairs now transacted, and under debate in the Cities, should not come to your ears. 'Tis most plain that this Republick of ours cannot have an affair of greater importance; but 'tis so differently discoursed of; and passion and particular interests make such division of the Wits, that 'tis almost impossible to know on which side the reason lies, unless a man first totally lay aside all manner of prepossession, and examine matters as becomes a good Republican, who considers only the weal and advantage of his Country. In the mean time we are very unhappy, that having with much toil freed our selves from a vexatious War, should now again see our selves upon the very point of falling into our past Calamities, by a Conduct repugnant to what our true Interests require.

I intend not to cry about the Town the Memorials given to the States by the Embassador of *France*, and Envoy of *England*. The Considerations upon the Alliance of *France*; the Reflections on those Considerations; the Treaties of *England*, and such like things now in Print, which most have the curiosity to read, though few make a due reflection thereon; nevertheless I doubt not but our Magistrates are sufficiently enlightned to judge as they ought of the great consequence of an affair of this Nature.

But (Sir) be pleased to observe what is the matter. *France* demands the renovation of a former Alliance^a had with this State; the King of *England* opposeth it: the French King will have a definitive answer; the King of *England* pretends that this Alliance is against him, and offers many hundred millions, and the very blood of half his Subjects to assist this State, in case *France* shall disturb it for refusal of this Alliance at His Majesty of *Great Brittain*s request. Upon this the States excuse themselves to *France*, in respect of the Conjuncture of time, which will not permit them to enter into Engagements.

Sir, You know I have no other interest in an affair of this nature than the desire to see my own dear Country enjoy a repose so necessary for her after those indetreatments and convulsions she hath suffer'd. You will here see only simple reflections, on which

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pray

pray give me your sentiments, to the end I may conforme mine thereunto. But that you may not speak without a ground, and without knowledge of the cause, as not only some particular persons do, but also some of those whom to our sorrow Heaven has made Judges in this cause. I intreat you, first to read the memorials which are extant on this subject, All the treaties which we have with Princes, and particularly the three last which we made with *England*, since the last peace which hath reconcil'd us with that Crown, so that I may give you my opinion upon the ground of the demand which the *French King* hath made of renewing his Alliance, and upon the instance of *England* to refuse it.

I find moreover that *France* had pleased us if it had not made this demand at present, and it might have so come to pass that if his most Christian Majesty had foreseen the confusions or inconveniency, it exposeth us to at this day, he would have left us to have some over to him with the time, and it may be also that we should soon have deemed it our interest to request his Alliance with the same instances, and importunity which we at other times have done. But on the other hand, can you dislike that the French King perceiving our delay to answer what we promised readily to comply with, should at length know what he is to trust to: I cannot blame him if he requite the simple excuses which the States make to him since they alledge no reason which may satisfie him.

'Tis true, the States are free, and not obliged to render the reason of their Conduct, yet the principal reasons whereof they serve themselves of a foundation for the Excuses which they make to enter at present into an Alliance with *France*, may be particularly reduced to two.

The first is, that if the States make an Alliance with *France*, because *France* demands it, they lose their Liberty and Freedom; for every time the most Christian King shall please to demand any thing, the States must obey as Slaves. Sir, I know not what you will think of this consequence; as for me who have looked into the Extension that Mr. Counsellor Pensionary hath made to the States of *Holland* of the Proposition of the French Alliance, viz. That His most Christian Majesty well knows that the States are free, and at liberty to make, or not to make Alliances. I find this consequence not to be just, as seeming only to enquire whether the King of *France* hath subject matter to pursue this demand, and whether we may fairly refuse it, and not whether we do not give him just cause to complain

plain of us in not answering as we ought, the sincere Assurances he hath given us of his Affection, which he even yet continues to do by the Letter which he wrote to the States General on the Subject of the Dolphins Marriage.

The second Reason the States bring to continue their Excuse of the French Alliance, is founded upon the repeated Instances of the most Christian King, concluding thereby, that there must lye hid in that demand, some suspicious motive which ought to impede and withhold their consent thereunto.

But Sir, upon considering the matter without passion, you will find that 'tis (in this, as in our private and particular affairs, natural for us to desire a yea, or a nay, a grant, or denial, when those persons from whom we may justly expect that which we request, turn their backs upon us. I do not believe that upon a consequence of so weak a foundation, they ought to establish a refusal, which may have effects so dangerous to the State.

But the Best of all the Reasons is that which they alledge in publick, viz. That 'tis the true interest of the States to continue Neuters in the present conjuncture: If His most Christian Majesty would rest content therewith, our State would be too happy. And I verily believe the King of France would have been content therewith, and that the States would have insisted upon it as their best Excuse, were there so good a ground for it as it ought to have to make us determine a Neutrality as things now stand.

Sir, I believe you are of their opinion, who say, that to pretend an exact Neutrality, the States ought either not to be allyed with any Prince, or to be equally allyed with all: And that it is to no purpose for us to say, that our Alliances were made during the War with France, since being stipulated, to continue after the Peace, they are to be looked on now as made after the Peace. Judge you then if France hath not reason to say, that we are not only allyed with the Emperour, with Spain, and many other Princes, but with England also to perpetuity, without any desire at all to be allyed with it. Our Neutrality at this rate can be nothing else than a Neutrality in Idea, conceived by the natural desire we have of the advantage we may draw thence, in case we could really attain to be Neuters at this present Conjuncture. They ground the pretence of this Neutrality on this, that having refused a Treaty of Guaranty, reciprocal with England, to which they say we are obliged by two Treaties, we now remain in an exact Neutrality, if we refuse the Alliance with France.

Sir, I may observe, that there are two things considerable on this score: First, Whether the two Treaties before alledged have been by consequence truly obligatory. Secondly, If they have so been (as England pretends) whether for that reason we ought to determine a refusal of the Alliance with France, as we have declined the League of Guaranty, to the end we may be able to stile our selves Neuters.

You see what Judgment you ought to give upon this matter, since (in truth) you will clearly observe that these two Treaties on which England so much builds, have remained without effect, and without obligation. And that a third Treaty of perpetual Alliance with that Crown, continuing in force, altogether obstructs our remaining Neuters.

The first of these Treaties is that of the month of January, 1678. by which England and the States agreed upon certain Articles or Conditions of Peace, to which they pretended to make France and Spain to consent,

and obliged themselves to contribute all their power thereunto, and to warrant that Peace. But the Peace not being concluded upon the Conditions intended by that Treaty, 'tis plain, that that Treaty is no further obligatory.

The second Treaty is that of the month of July, in the same year. The difficulty *France* made to restore places, after the ratification of the Peace, gave occasion for this Treaty, by which *England* and *France* agreed, that if the Peace between *France* and the *States* were not signed before the eleventh of that month, they would unite all their forces to oblige *France* to a Peace, and afterwards would agree upon the forces they were to contribute to warrant it. But the Peace was signed the tenth, and so by consequence that Treaty is fallen to the ground, and continues without obligation as the former, it being impossible (the foundation of the Treaty failing) that any one thing dependant thereon, should subsist alone.

Sir, You will perhaps say that I here plead the cause of *France*, but I assure you truth is more prevalent with me than any particular interest. And we our selves have acknowledged that these Treaties do not bind us when we declined to make the Treaty of Guaranty reciprocal with *England*, which hath given occasion for the general opinion, most men not well informed are of. That all Treaties made by us during the War, do not continue since the Peace: And that in refusing to enter into any Engagement with *France*, we do but only maintain a Neutrality.

Sir, I know 'tis either ignorance, or the ill designs of some particular persons that hath begot this obstacle in the Spirit of the publick. For 'tis well known, we have a third Treaty of Alliance with *England*, still in force, which is that of the third of *March*, 1674. the streets ring of it, and you cannot be a stranger to it; only observe that this Treaty was not made on the Subject of the War, but to engage us in a perpetual Alliance with *England*. And upon the obligations of this Treaty it is that *England* takes the ground of its soliciting this State not to ally it self with *France*, and not to do a thing which it judgeth contrary to the good Union and Amity we have promised.

By this you will judge if for not having made the Treaty of Guaranty with *England*, we may fairly refuse the Alliance of *France*. And whether for this we are less allied with *England*, and almost all the Princes of Europe. And whether as things now stand we can so much as pretend to remain in a true Neutrality.

It may be you know the Discourse is, that *France* will make War with *England*, as 'tis said it will with *Spain*, in attacking *Italy*, and in Germany: That the King's design is upon the whole to engage us in a War with *England*, and that although the Alliance which the King of *France* demands be only defensive, yet he will find a way to oblige us to assist him in this War, in causing himself to be attacked by *England*, which he may easily prove by sending some of his Ships to affront the *English*, upon the account of the Flag. And that *England* finding it self obliged to declare War with *France*, to revenge that affront, the States by this means will be drawn headlong into that Calamity which they so much dread.

Be pleased but to reflect upon all these consequences, and upon the solidity of the foundations on which they are built. You know better than

than I how much it is our interest to be united with *England*; but I can not see how you can find solidity enough in the principles they lay down, or in the pretence of *England* since it would needs have it that we fail of our duty if we renew our Alliance with *France*, that Alliance was never against *England*, why should it be so now? All the Princes with whom the States are allyed may say as much thereof.

But Sir, let us leave there all foreign considerations, and inquire into our own interest preferable to every thing else. Do you not find as well I, that 'tis essential to our liberty to be no less engaged to one King than to another. Has not a mischievous experience more than once taught us what reliance we may have upon the one rather than the other? And our independance is never better established than to carry our selves equally on both sides; and by this means we have an assurance to have one for us against the other.

Sir, I leave you to make all these reflections, and return to the state of a Neutrality so convenient, and so much coveted by our republick. But can that be obtained no other way save by renouncing all the Alliances which we have with so many Princes, or in renewing that which heretofore we have had with *France*, and from which we have no slender reason to excuse our selves?

'Tis certain the first of these alterations suits not with the interest of this Republick, on the other hand how reasonable soever the second appears to me, yet it is not sufficient to secure us against the danger which we fear, which is, lest the Alliance with *France* should oblige us to enter into a war against *Engl.* what expedient then shall we make use of in this perplexity? As for me, if I may speak the truth without partiality I am apt to believe that a King, who hath strongly testified that he will concern himself no less to contribute to our repose, than to secure our Liberty, and who is now in a Condition to need our aid, will against our inclinations engage us in a war. I much rather believe he will in this Conjunction banish our panique fears, and heal our apprehensions in consenting which we renew with him shall not engage us to enter into a war with *England* for any Subject matter that can produce, we promising the same reciproally to him. 'Tis in this manner that we may truly stand Neuter in a Conjunction wherein it so much imports as to continue so.

Sir, I am confident an expedient of this kind will meet with your approbation, and if you and I have any hand in the matter, there's no particular consideration will be able to make us depart from this Sentiment, whatever happens. I am perswaded that the King of *France* knows so well the ground and bottom of our inclinations, that if the States make any steps in this affair which are not conformable to them, he will not look upon it to be the act of the generality. But since publick resolutions do explicate the general sentiments, I cannot see what we have to say in case he do so. And that it is not for him to make the distinction, if some particular persons interests do hinder us from corresponding as we would with the marks of his amity. I would hope for so much, that he will make some allowance, and have some regard to the slow humour of this people, who recoil rather than advance, when they are pressed, and give them time to lay aside and retires from those prepossessions in which they now are; and that they may have worn out these sinister impressions which some have made on them against their true interests.

Sir, You will eminently oblige me to send me word whether you are of my opinion, and whether you find me partial in any thing but what respects your self. I expect a word in answer, and am

SIR,

Your Servant, &c.

Postscript.

SIR,

Since I wrote my Letter, I hear that the conduct of the States of Holland touching the deliberation there taken the 23d. past, gave the King of France just cause to complain of their excuses of entring into his Alliance at present.

The Ambassador complained that he having been promised, that all things should stay till he knew the ultimate result & pleasure of the King his Master, touching the first offer which the States made. And that having moreover received His Majesties Orders by a Courier express, and therewith acquainted the States by a memorial of the 22th. Nevertheless the Deputies notwithstanding this took their resolution the next day the 23d. without ever communicating this memorial to the Cities, and without having had any deliberation themselves on a matter of that importance, except upon that of the 12th. And as though there had been no other memorial since the last assembly. The Deputies have given their consent in conformity to the former deliberations made upon the single opposition made to the assembly the month precedent, upon the demand which France made of renewing of the Alliance.

Some particular persons talk here very high, that in another conjuncture, and for affairs of less moment, the Deputies were made to be responsible. And at the same time disavow their having made any such transaction, or advance in this affair. That some of the Towns say they have been deceived in being made to believe that the King of France was satisfied with this resolution. There are others who disown the Conduct of their Deputies: And infine, that the Councils of the Towns will examin more maturely an affair of the highest consequence. And as to the Provinces, except those of Frize and Groningen, they ought not much to doubt of the other for that those of Guelder, Overissell and Utrecht, being the most exposed, and seeing yet at Wesel, within their Neighbourhood, an Army of France, they may be brought to take resolution more vigourous, and more conformable to their interest.

FINIS.